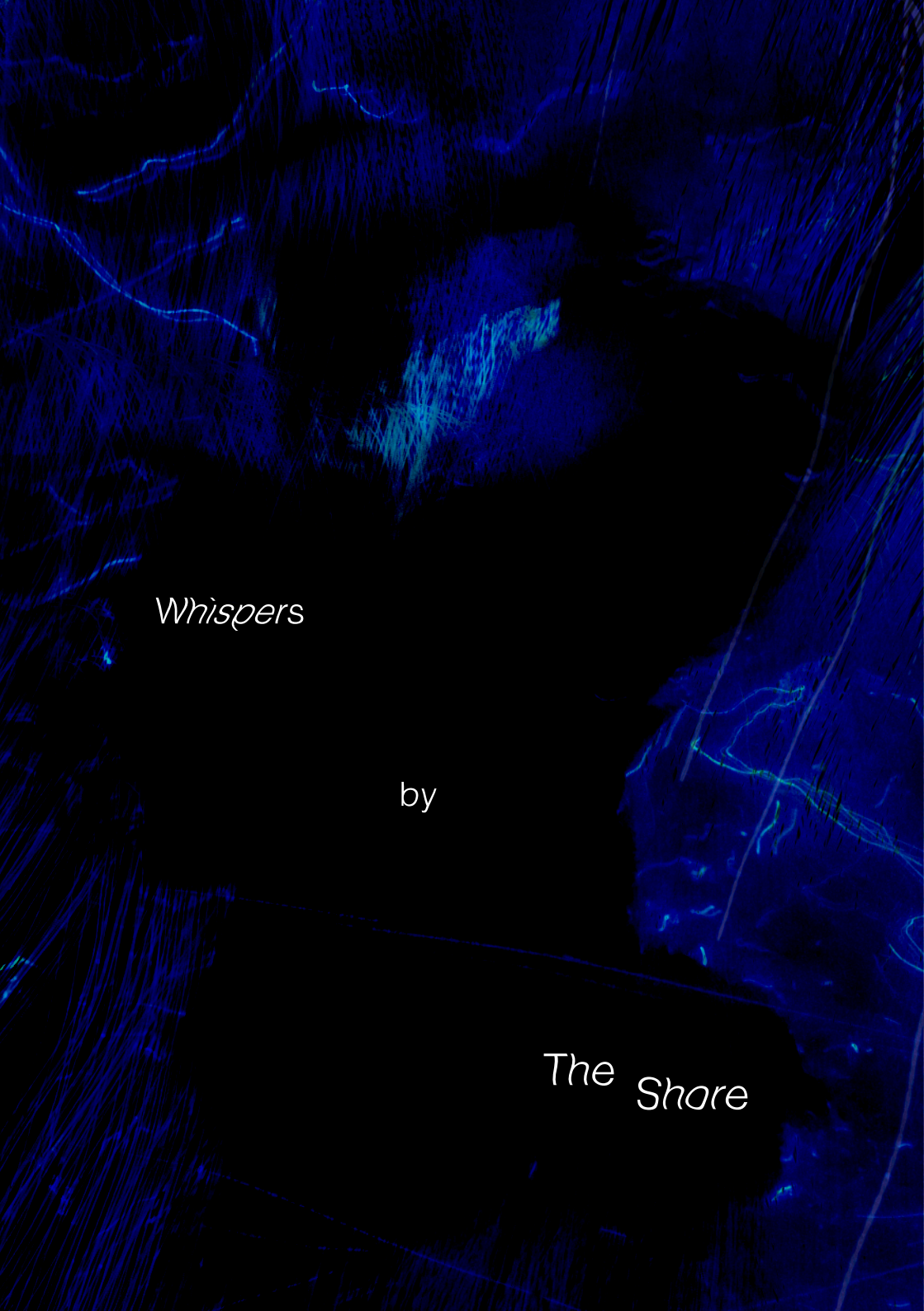
Whispers
by
The Shore

SUNKEN
SOUND

Introduction

'What does it mean to
hear the sound of water?'

'Whispers by The Shore' covers the recent explorations I had with sound and water. A means to make sense of abstract relationships. This will be done through the lens of music, as each paragraph is a narration that attempts to weave sounds, sight and soul into spirit. So please, sink with me as I dive into my memories and hear all its faint whispers.

Sleek Blue. That's the shade that was tinted all-over the sights I saw in Kobe. Being a port city, the color seems to rationalize a lot more. The water is influenced. Intertwined with the city very deeply. Conceived into quiet forms, shades of the ocean are enshrined within the surfaces of every wall we saw.

And I've always been one to aim to reciprocate that. Energy is important, I'd like to feel coupled with wherever I am not as a sense of belonging but a sense of understanding. So merely as a tourist, I have to exercise my senses. And like usual I try to hear what I can see.

The first song I played when I landed was Blue Beach - Welcome to Your Beach by Steve Heitt. Not like I'm summering on the beach at all, at 12 °C I'd rather die than touch a lick of water right now. But the moment I got on the bus and peered into the blistering sparkles from the wide harmonious ocean, I knew it'd fit like a glove.

The empathic feeling of the guitars, surrounded by this massive and echoey cajon strikes a particular chord within me. A blueish bliss that you can only evoke from sights like this, because there's a feeling of uncertainty that you'll ever return here the same you as you are now. As I peered into the blistering blue while letting the reverb ring in my ears, I reminisced prematurely. The sight of the waters reflecting the faces that I may not see here next time I'm here, a strange emotion so sulky yet it feels without reason. But that's just the emotion Steve Hiett's Down On The Road By The Beach feels. Oozing with character & heart strung with melancholy, a perfect piece to set off a journey that feels straight out of a dream.

Or so I thought. Because the rest became a blur. I can't seem to ever remember the heights of my life. Only the lulls in between them. Why do our memories fade? Why can't I dig up the good that remains. I lingered on this for a while, contemplating the juxtaposition of me and water. Have I become the sea, a series of endless waves, crashing over the same shore wiping and returning every grain of time. Or am I the bottom of it all, the blackest blue. The depths of emptiness that feel abyssal yet inviting.

I stumbled upon this thought half asleep while I was left within the oozes of Vivian & Ondine. Vast nothingness and yet the fear of every, a true representation of the darkest depths. Experiencing these albums puts you in a slumber state, the whole album is never static but it's also never directional. It's a constant downwards, uninterrupted and unembraced yet you can feel it. As if you're waiting for something to happen. But it doesn't, that's simply the magic of William Basinski.

But these ideas only consider the self, at least in a physical presence. We have not considered the abstract. The strangeness of taking the form of a droplet, for example. For we can not explore the infinity of honor by just considering ourselves within our own form, become the form. Take its shape. Flow within its harmony and flow in its waves. To achieve true spiritual understanding, we must exist within the environment of the desired sound.

So let's take place as a river. Close your eyes for a split second and imagine how music would sound if you were as tranquil and undisturbed as a river deep in the water. Whatever you've imagined, it could be found akin or amplified by Windswept Adan. The way the guitar strings pluck feels like the subtle dawn shining ray shining rays onto a subtle pond. But specifically in this album, Ichiko Aoba explores more than just the guitar. The playing (with whichever instrument is explored) is soft, yet speedy; it's unlike anything else in modern day folk. Every word that rings also like a tremor, a transfer of how water moves into trees or life extends when thirst is quenched. The singing on Windswept Adan often sounds like an onomatopoeia, Ichiko's vocal range can simply be as sharp as the bird in the wind and as soft as a grain of sand.

Overall all of the compositions here are eclectic and bouncy, they mirror the glimmering of life and ecosystem within. And we are strings that are connecting everything within this beautiful bubble. I personally put this album on at any given situation, even in disturbed environments where music like this usually doesn't work. Yet the interweavings, the essence of this album shines through, a striking harmony or a sudden shift in element like life moving and directing as mother nature intended. So let the water weave into you and replace you, only then will you find that not a single moment that feels wasted or empty within the walls of Windswept Adan.

We're soaked and amazed. Drip in beautiful confinements and wearing skin beyond lasting grasps. Yet we're still a tiny part of what's available. Why not go? Why not go farther & further? Not only considering water as a metaphor for emotions or even shape, what about water as a spiritual state. How abstract can water become? Can we correlate the wholeness of water to something so distinctly human. What about something subtle and abstract? The word delirium does that strike a chord within you? Perhaps not but let's

demonstrate

You see it too, don't you? Remember how all the memories disappeared. Right before this we were just lingering on the half asleep state that we explored on Vivian & Iodine. And now our eyes are wide open. That interception, that is delirium and that is exactly what 神秘的情人 [Mysterious Lover] - 泰合志恒 [Taihe Zhiheng]. It is a foreign state of almost a memory. One that we can only experience as human as we are the only species who can comprehend emotion in this philosophical way. One minute ago you're there and the other you're watching the end credits to life one last time.

Truthfully Mysterious Lover bleeds more pessimistic than any other record here. As calming as it is, there's always a bit of eeriness that will not let go. Nostalgia as a trap, a desire for the past you can no longer grasp. Yet the way its sequence is quick, like a shutter of waves, but it stays in the same lane of loops. You're pulled back and forth, permanently shaking your vision. We've discussed Vivian & Ondine but this takes the concept to a different curve. We're not submerged, we're afloat, palely. We're on the line in between the surface, head in the water and eyes in the sky. It's almost as if we're on the brink of death only hushed and deluded by broken faces. These fractures, this experience can only be compared to an equally essential element to our survival. Because we can speculate on this state infinitely, but the truth is that we have not experienced delirium, but we can only carve a line within the surface of something equally unknown, in an attempt to rationalize it.

So where are we now, We've seen water, we've become water, we've immersed in water and we compared water. What else is there to do with such a common element? The possibility seems endless, but something so incredibly important that is so tied to this concept has not been discussed yet.

What is it like to truly hear water in music? People describe music as aquatic all the time, hell I'm pretty sure I've done that a handful of times within this essay. But nothing quite sounds like water. We've now removed from the spiritual spectacle, we're looking for physical acknowledgement. Waves, droplets and the collision of them, how do they come to life in sound.

The answer comes with a title so on the nose, it almost seems like a joke. Wetlands by Hiroshi Yoshimura succeeds on this. We've spent the entirety of this scene talking about water in a sense of place, time and mind all so that we can return to the original intention. The introduction begs 'What does it mean to hear the sound of water?' and we've collided with the essence of it all. I believe every record so far has been a good representation of liquid textures and vast flow like imaginations, but the key to hearing the sound of water is the onomatopoeia.

Imagine the immersion of the flow, not just anywhere. Not the flow of the sea or the flow of a pond, the mere flow of water slowly rushing down the faucet and clashing upon your hands. Really observe that sound and feel it. And then listen to how Wetland describes it. It is an extensive experience that ties life and sound together like no other. All of the field recordings clash and observe the stillness of water and combine them with the mundane nature of everyday action. Wetland thrives on the sound washing your hands as much as it thrives off of the sea and rivers. It's a call back to reality that is much needed within the confinements of imaginations that we've explored water through.

It's a distinct bliss above all. Because at the end of the day, when we search for the sound of water, there will always be strings or bigger emotions attached to what you hear. But this strips it all down to the fundamental, elongated waves and short synthetic bursts that are practically a distillation of emotion. It explores the inbetween of ambient, almost like minimalistic art. Presenting itself as is. And what you make of the sound is what you make of it, it becomes up to you and

you

only .

And that concludes our search for the sound of water, for we have reached the stillness between the clashing waves of emotions.

This silence is now our reward.

Sunken Sound is a monthly zine that aims to discuss music through more tangible means.

In the dying ages of music magazines and the oversaturation of internet music discourse, having a physical yet brief product to hold onto could provide more meaningful insight rather than an article. Sunken Sound aims to thread that fine line of a creative and critical outlet when it comes to discussion of music, blending visuals and words to pitch a sound to listeners who have yet not experienced the works; while at the same time bringing justice to the art for those who have experienced.

Sunken Sound is currently run by one person. But I would like to invite writers who are interested in spotlighting an artist or a movement, as one's personal taste cannot cover such a diverse world of music. After all, Sunkensky is meant to cover a world of sound within the palm of your hands rather than the eyes of a screen.

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